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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//DDI/OEA//
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-Z//
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0298
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6654
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6725
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; September 17, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo

Will Japan Change?; Hatoyama Takes Office
as Japan's New Prime Minister

JoongAng Ilbo

ROK Has Four Times More Labor Unions
with Full-time Union Members than Japan

Dong-a Ilbo

Faced with 7 Billion Won Damage Suit for Illegal Strikes, Korean
Railroad Union Issues "Struggle Bonds"
to Collect 3.5 Billion Won from Union Members

Hankook Ilbo, All TVs

Korean Won Hits 11-Month High, Raising Concerns that the Won's Rapid
Rise May Impact Local Exporters' Competitiveness, Hampering Economic
Recovery

Hankyoreh Shinmun

Court Accepts Retrial for Kang Ki-hoon who was Convicted in 1991 of
Forging the Will and Testament of His Fellow Activist, Kim Ki-sul,
who Burned Himself to Death in May of That Year in Protest against
Then Military Government

Segye Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun

126.4 Trillion Won Set for Regional Development

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

[1](#)1. Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg will reportedly
visit East Asia, including the ROK, China and Japan, later this
month to discuss U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks and ways to resume
the Six-Party Talks, among others. (JoongAng, Hankook)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggested on Sept. 15 that the U.S. is prepared to engage in direct talks with North Korea to encourage the communist state to rejoin the Six-Party Talks on its nuclear program. She was quoted: "One of the ways we perhaps can get North Korea to engage is by explaining directly and clearly what the purpose is and what the possible consequences and incentives could be." (All)

In a related development, a senior ROKG official raised the possibility that the envisioned U.S.-North Korea talks may take place in late October or early November, saying: "Washington will need some time to prepare for such a meeting. So it should be no earlier than late October." (Chosun, Hankook, Segye)

According to Yonhap News Agency, an aide to Sen. John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said on Sept. 15 that the senator received an invitation from North Korea to visit Pyongyang and that he is positively considering visiting the communist state. (Chosun, Hankook, Hankyoreh, Seoul, YTN)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

All ROK media covered Sept. 15 press remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in which she said: "One of the ways we perhaps can

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get North Korea to engage is by explaining directly and clearly what the purpose is and what the possible consequences and incentives could be. ... The U.S. is not acting in any way that is not part of agreed-upon - an agreed-upon process that has been worked out with the Six-Party members."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo commented that Secretary Clinton's statement has clarified that the purpose of bilateral talks with North Korea is to bring the North back to the Six-Party Talks, while putting to rest worries that such talks could replace the Six-Party Talks. Conservative Dong-a Ilbo, meanwhile, portrayed Secretary Clinton's statement as an explanation against ongoing criticism that the U.S. has made a policy shift by accepting bilateral talks with the North. Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun quoted a local expert as speculating that the U.S. is likely to provide details of the proposed "comprehensive package" of incentives during the bilateral talks, which would reportedly include normalized ties and a security guarantee in return for the North's denuclearization.

Most newspapers quoted a senior ROKG official as raising the possibility yesterday that the envisioned U.S.-North Korea talks may take place in late October or early November, saying: "Washington will need some time to prepare for such a meeting. So it should be no earlier than late October."

In particular, conservative Chosun Ilbo further cited the ROKG official as surmising that if Washington-Pyongyang talks materialize, Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, will probably visit Pyongyang and that Washington wants him to meet Kang Sok-ju, the North's First Vice Foreign Minister who played a key role in concluding the bilateral Geneva Accord in 1994.

Most ROK media replayed a Yonhap News report quoting an aide to Sen. John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as saying on Sept. 15 that the senator received an invitation from North Korea to visit Pyongyang and that he is positively considering visiting the communist state.

FEATURES

CLINTON CALMS FEARS ABOUT TALKS WITH N. KOREA
(Chosun Ilbo, September 17, 2009, Front Page)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won and Reporter Ahn Yong-hyun

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Tuesday said that if the U.S. and North Korea should start bilateral talks, Washington will make it clear to North Korea what the possible incentives are if it commits to denuclearization and what the consequences will be if it does not. A South Korean government source on Wednesday said the talks will probably happen in late October or early November.

Clinton indicated that the only purpose of bilateral talks with Pyongyang would be to persuade the North back to Six-Party Talks, putting to rest worries that they could replace the multilateral framework. "One of the ways we perhaps can get North Korea to engage is by explaining directly and clearly what the purpose is and what the possible consequences and incentives could be," she said. "The U.S. is not acting in any way that is not part of agreed-upon - an agreed-upon process that has been worked out with the Six-Party members."

The South Korean source said if Washington-Pyongyang talks materialize, Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea policy, will probably visit Pyongyang and that Washington wants him to meet Kang Sok-ju, the North's First Vice Foreign Minister who played a key role in concluding the bilateral Geneva Accords in 1994.

Meanwhile, the Yonhap news agency quoted aides to John Kerry, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as saying

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Tuesday that his office has received an invitation from North Korea to visit Pyongyang. Aides said that, if he visits (North Korea), it will be to take a close look at the reality there rather than to discuss the denuclearization issue.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

TOKOLA